

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 519
By Jones R (Shel)

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Ernest C. Withers, Jr. of
Memphis, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it was with great sadness and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of our state learned of the death of Ernest C. Withers, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Ernest Withers, Jr. was a distinguished citizen of the state of Tennessee who was very dedicated to his profession, community and family; and

WHEREAS, for most of his life, Mr. Withers has been in the midst of history, making it, recording it and promoting it; he was especially concerned with nurturing the history of the African-American experience - this was the focus of his research, teachings and writings; and

WHEREAS, he served as Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee with a focus on minority affairs; while at the national party, he held responsibilities to ensure the broadest inclusion and participation by African-American women and other minorities in the Carter White House Administration; and

WHEREAS, his service was exemplary in other national, state and local governmental and public service positions, including the D.C. City Council staff, consultant and contract posts with the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, Interior, Housing and Urban Development, the State Department, the Small Business Administration, the Library of Congress and the Veterans Administration; and

WHEREAS, he was a graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C., a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., a 2nd Lieutenant in the ROTC and a highly regarded professor at the Federal City College in Washington, D.C. in his early years; and

WHEREAS, Ernest Withers was an active and devout member of the Saint Augustine Catholic Church, where he served on the important Catholic Council, while in Washington, D.C.; he organized and led for a decade the unique and dynamic Committee on Africa and the Diaspora; and

WHEREAS, the church based group, lead by Mr. Withers, developed and sponsored programs and activities in areas ranging from the South African anti-apartheid movement, famine in Africa, Haitian relief, Afro-Brazilia homelessness, and the war on drug abuse; and

WHEREAS, he returned to Memphis in 1991 where he served as an adjunct faculty member at Shelby State Community College, expertly teaching political science and Black history; and

WHEREAS, the legacy Ernest Withers leaves behind will be long remembered and treasured by friends and associates for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, he leaves to cherish his memory: his parents, Ernest and Dorothy Withers; one sister, Rosalind W. Sawyer; five brothers, Perry O. Withers, Dyrall L. Withers, Andrew Withers, Clarence Withers and Dedrick Withers; he also leaves several aunts, twelve nieces and nephews, two great nieces and nephews and a host of other relatives and many friends ; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this legislative body pause in its deliberations to remember the exemplary life of this fine Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Ernest C. Withers, Jr., remembering with admiration his strong character and many selfless contributions to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Ernest C. Withers, Jr.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation, with this final clause omitted from such copy.